

Pregnancy: A Special Time for Nutrition

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Whether you are a first time mom or considering another child, nutrition during pregnancy is vital to help with the development of a healthy baby. Pregnancy is a special time for moms, dads, family and friends to enjoy and experience. With pregnancy comes responsibility to ensure your child is cared for. This includes adequate nutrition for proper growth and development. The following information contains nutritional guidelines to help with your pregnancy.

What is normal weight gain? The typical response is 25-35 pounds. Weight gain is individualized depending on pre-pregnancy height for weight. If mom was a good height for weight when she conceived, 26-35 pounds is appropriate; underweight, 28-40 pounds; if overweight, depending on how much overweight, either 15-25 pounds or no more than 15 pounds for the entire pregnancy is recommended. Check with your physician or registered dietitian for clarity on how much weight gain is appropriate for you (American Dietetic Association, ADA).

What you eat before and during your pregnancy influences you and your baby's health. Often, moms eat more than is required to meet nutritional needs during pregnancy resulting in excessive weight gain. Yes mom is eating for two; however, only an extra 300 calories per day; 500 calories for twins; and 750 calories for triplets, is required for pregnancy. Three hundred calories is not double portions but rather an 8oz glass of non-fat milk, 1oz of cheese and 6 saltine crackers (ADA).

Calcium (Ca) needs increase to 1,000 milligrams (mg)/day. If this amount is not consumed, Ca will be extracted from mom's skeleton for the baby. This will place mom at high risk for developing osteoporosis later in life. Most prenatal vitamins provide 200mg of Ca which is inadequate. Read the food label to verify the amount of calcium. Calcium food sources include: 8oz milk = 300mg; 1C non-fat yogurt = 450mg; 1C Ca-fortified OJ = 300mg; 1oz Swiss cheese = 270mg; ½C ice cream = 90mg; 1 orange = 52mg; 1C cooked broccoli = 136mg and ½C tofu = 260mg Ca. If you are not consuming the required daily amount, consider a Ca supplement. Talk to your physician or registered dietitian for guidance (USDA Nutrient Database).

Ensure adequate fluid intake. This will help with constipation, feelings of hunger and dehydration. During both pregnancy and lactation, fluid requirements increase to 10-12 eight ounce glasses or 80-96oz daily. This does not have to be plain water. Milk, soup, jell-o, fruit, decaf teas, and juice all count. Be watchful of juice intake as over consumption is common and too many calories result. A serving of juice is 4oz or ½ cup (Dairy Council of California).

To be safe, caffeine should not exceed 200mg daily. Excessive caffeine places mom at high risk for a miscarriage, especially during the first trimester. Caffeine is found in soda, coffee, tea, and chocolate. 12oz Coca-Cola/Pepsi = 35mg; Mountain Dew = 55mg; 8oz Red Bull = 80mg; 2oz milk chocolate = 12mg; 2oz dark chocolate = 30mg;

8oz coffee = 110-150mg; tall (12oz) cappuccino = 120mg; decaf coffee = 2mg; and an 8oz latte = 80mg caffeine (www.calorieking.com).

There are more nutritional guidelines to become familiar with. Contact the Nutrition Department at Camp Lester Naval Hospital to learn more about: folic acid needs to reduce the risk of birth defects; types of fish to avoid and why; 96 herbs to avoid; high iron and vitamin-C food sources to address iron deficiency anemia; cheeses, sushi, salad dressings and lunch meats to limit due to listeria monocytogenes, nitrates and food borne illnesses; recommendations to relieve heartburn, constipation, nausea/vomiting and swelling; gestational diabetes; teenaged pregnancy or multiple gestation requirements; and/or obtain an individualized meal plan to meet your nutritional needs. What are you waiting for? We are here to help you through your pregnancy. Call 643-7714 and schedule an appointment with a dietitian today.